OHRM ASPIRING LEADER PROGRAM (ALP)
ONLINE AGLEARN TRAINING

L eadership is more than motivating others to perform well and engaging them in our mission. Effective leadership is a constant personal challenge requiring effective communication skills and the ability to build productive relationships and coalitions.

The online, cost effective **OHRM Aspiring Leader Program** is designed to assist you to identify and strengthen these and other critical leadership skills. It will also introduce you to the wealth of resources available through AgLearn.

> Remember, leaders are not always managers or supervisors.
> Everyone in the OHRM can be a leader.
> Begin your leadership journey here.

OBJECTIVES: The OHRM Aspiring Leader Program has two main objectives:

- Enhanced understanding of the fundamental leadership competencies
- Discovering development resources for continual learning through AgLearn

INTENDED AUDIENCE: This course is for you if:

- You aspire to be a leader
- You want to be an even better leader
- You want to learn more about continual learning resources available in AgLearn

DURATION: Approximately 8-10 hours of online learning plus other developmental activities.

COMPETENCIES: Participants will enhance these essential leadership competencies:

1. **Accountability** - Holds self and others accountable for measurable high-quality, timely, and cost-effective results. Determines objectives, sets priorities, and delegates work. Accepts responsibility for mistakes. Complies with established control systems and rules.
2. **Conflict Management** - Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions. Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner.
3. **Customer Service** - Anticipates and meets the needs of both internal and external customers. Delivers high-quality products and services; is committed to continuous improvement.
4. **Decisiveness** - Makes well-informed, effective, and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; perceives the impact and implications of decisions.
5. **Influencing/Negotiating** - Persuades others; builds consensus through give and take; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals.
6. **Team Building** - Inspires and fosters team commitment, spirit, pride, and trust. Facilitates cooperation and motivates team members to accomplish group goals.

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PROGRAM COMPONTENTS: The Aspiring Leader Program has four components (see component details on next pages):

1. The Competency Self-Assessment
2. Aspiring Leader Program On-Line Courses
3. Evaluation
4. Continual Learning: job aides, recommended reading, additional courses, and shadow assignment information

> Be sure to include OHRM Aspiring Leader in your Individual Development Plan (IDP). Resources for planning and creating IDPs are available at: http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR4040-410.pdf

Be sure to coordinate with your supervisor on the time when you participate in this training to ensure that you agree on balancing your own need for training and development with work priorities. Remember that your supervisor must grant time for you to participate in training during normal duty hours, and advanced supervisory approval is required to take training outside of the normal duty hours (as required by Title 5 and the Fair Labor Standards Act).

PROGRAM COMPONENTS DESCRIPTION: Following is a description and detailed information about the components in the OHRM Aspiring Leader Program.

Program Component 1 – Competency Self-Assessment

Begin your training by completing the Competency Self-Assessment. This tool is based on the OPM leadership competencies, and provides an ongoing method for development by assessing your proficiency levels in various competencies and assists you in identifying areas to build your knowledge and skills. The self-assessment can be found at the following link: http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/vu/docs/alp-competency-sa.pdf.

Program Component 2 - Aspiring Leader Program On-line Courses

This program is the beginning of your journey into the development of your leadership skills. You will explore your strengths and increase your knowledge and skills in self-management, accountability, dealing with conflict, customer service, decisiveness, influencing/negotiating, and understanding teams. After you have completed the program, there are suggestions on how to develop a plan to ensure that you remain focused on your next steps to continually grow and develop as a leader.

The following courses must be complete to receive credit for the program.

Accountability
Professionalism, Business Etiquette, and Personal Accountability (1hr)

Emotional Intelligence
Using Emotional Intelligence on the Job (1hr)

Strengths
My Strengths and Weaknesses – (5 min. video)

Conflict Management/Customer Service
Workplace Conflict: Strategies for Resolving Conflicts (1hr)

Decisiveness
Overcoming the Barriers to Decisiveness – (1hr)

Influencing and Negotiations
Negotiation Essentials: Communicating (1hr)

Team Building
Leading Teams: Building Trust and Commitment (1hr)

Diversity
Managing a Diverse Team (1hr)

Next Steps
Leadership Essentials: Creating Your Own Leadership Development Plan (1hr)

GETTING STARTED

Find the OHRM Aspiring Leader curriculum in AgLearn, add it to your To-Do list and then complete the survey when finished. Here's how:

1. Log into AgLearn: http//www.aglearn.usda.gov
2. Click on the **Catalog** tab,
3. Select a **Simple Catalog Search**,
4. Enter in the **Keyword Line** the AgLearn course name listed above.
5. Click on **Search Button**
6. When the course name appears:
7. Click on **Self Assign Curriculum**
8. The curriculum contains 9 courses. Each course will appear in your "To-Do List"
9. After completing each course, be sure to take the survey to obtain credit for the course.
10. When you submit the survey, you may have to select the Home tab on the top of the page to return to your courses. You will need to go into your "To-Do List" to take the next course.

Need Help? Please visit the AgLearn Job Aids web page for trouble shooting and getting started tips, or ask a Virtual University team member.

Program Component 3 - Evaluation

After you have completed all courses, please complete the Aspiring Leader Program Evaluation. This evaluation can be obtained from Roderick Mance of the Virtual University (by email at roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov). This finalizes the curriculum and all courses should have moved to you completed work list. This evaluation is designed to measure your satisfaction as well as provide information so that we continually improve this course.

Program Component 4 – Mentoring

Identify someone to serve as your mentor to help you develop leadership skills. Select someone who is not in your chain of command who can give you helpful feedback and guidance. If you need assistance in finding a mentor, contact Roderick Mance (roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov).

Program Component 5 – Shadowing

Identify at least one leader to shadow as you are completing the program. Shadowing can include observing a leader in a variety of situations, such as at a meeting, during a conference call, giving a presentation, or running a staff meeting.

Program Component 6 – Continual Learning

This component includes recommended reading, additional courses and experiential opportunities. Component 6 is not a requirement to complete the Aspiring Leader Program, but it is recommended for your consideration in growing as a leader.
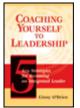
AgLearn Job Aids

The following helpful AgLearn job aids can assist you with the Aspiring Leader courses, such as:

- Trouble Shooting AgLearn Issues
- Getting Started in AgLearn
- How to get into Books 24x7
- Tips to Build Your Individual Development Plan (IDP)

Recommended Readings from Books 24X7 in AgLearn
Read the books listed and watch for announcements showing the dates/times when the Virtual University will conduct interactive webinar sessions to discuss each book.

Coaching Yourself to Leadership: Five Key Strategies for Becoming an Integrated Leader

By Ginny O'Brien
HRD Press © 2006 (172 pages) *Citation*
ISBN: 9780874258691

Integrating competencies from three domains of leadership, this no-nonsense book provides proven practices and techniques that will transform you into a more positive, authentic leader so you can make work better for yourself and those you currently lead.

Coaching Yourself to Leadership—Five Key Strategies for Becoming an Integrated Leader

> Introduction
> Chapter One - Be Authentic—Work According to Your Values
> Chapter Two - Be Visionary—Know Where You Want to Go and How to Get There
> Chapter Three - Be Emotionally Intelligent—Build Your EQ Muscles
> Chapter Four - Be Assertive—Know How to Communicate Effectively
> Chapter Five - Be Connected – Build Strategic Relationships

Develop Your Leadership Skills, Revised Edition

By John Adair
Kogan Page © 2010 (88 pages) *Citation*
ISBN: 9780749455491
Full of exercises and checklists, this guide offers stimulating insights into recognizing and developing individual leadership qualities, acquiring personal authority, and mastering core leadership functions such as planning, communicating and motivating.

Develop Your Leadership Skills, Revised Edition

> Introduction
> Chapter 1 - What You Have to Be
> Chapter 2 - What You Have to Know
> Chapter 3 - What You Need to Do
> Chapter 4 - How to Turn the Core Leadership Functions into Skills
> Chapter 5 - How to Develop Yourself
> Chapter 6 - How to Lead at the Strategic Level
> Chapter 7 - How to Grow Leaders in your Organization
> Appendix - A Leadership Checklist

Recommended Additional Courses

- Search in AgLearn for key words, example: Leadership Essential, SkillSoft Government Leadership Advantage 2.0

- Search for additional books that cover leadership topics in AgLearn's Books 24X7.

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Experience Opportunities

Training doesn't always have to be a formal course. Explore options from following list for additional ways to stretch and develop competencies through experiences.

- **Work groups** - serve on a special work group to use your current skills in a new environment.

- **Teams/Projects** - request to join a special team, project or assignment.

- **Focus or sensing groups** - these are a group of people who discuss their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a service, concept, or idea. An example of this is the chiefs sensing group: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/chief/sensing.

- **Cross-Training** - acquire knowledge and skills from coworkers, who have similar grade levels and experiences. A new skill can make you more valuable.

- **Details** - check the USDA Detail Registry at http://opportunities.usda.gov/ for opportunities.

- **Shadowing assignments** - These are designed to give you exposure to managerial duties, responsibilities, and to show you different approaches to handling them. It also provides exposure and experience in a different unit than your own. A shadow assignment is an important next step after completing the Online Aspiring Leader Program. Ask your supervisor for recommendations for you to engage in a shadow assignment.

- **Developmental stretch assignments** - Stretch assignments allow you to ease into leadership roles by exposing you to an array of roles and responsibilities. Stretch assignments are about getting you to expand your competencies and skills to newer, wider levels. By definition, "a stretch assignment is one that requires you to take a leap beyond your comfort zone and, in the process, pick up new skills".

- **Be a Mentor - Find a Mentor** - The mentoring process links a less experienced employee with a more experienced one to help facilitate professional growth. A mentor is someone not in your chain of command who is in a position to help with job and career issues, and who is committed to doing so. For more information on mentoring please contact Roderick Mance of the Virtual University (email roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov).

- **Be a Coach - Find a Coach** - Coaching is a thought provoking and creative process that inspires people to maximize their personal and professional potential. This is a method of instruction where the desired outcome is to obtain a certain level of knowledge or skills. See Marisol Rodriguez of the Virtual University for more information about coaching (email marisol.rodriguez@dm.usda.gov).

- Complete other online leadership development courses.

- Join professional organizations and volunteer to lead a group or serve as an officer.

- Participate in supervisor training.

- Serve as a representative on a special emphasis committee.

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SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN

Activity	Description	Estimated time	Date completed
Program Component 1: Self Assessment	Complete the Competency Self Assessment tool to assess your proficiency level and identify areas to build your knowledge and skills	30 minutes to 1 hour	
Program Component 2: Online Courses	Complete the online-courses in AgLearn a) **Accountability**: Professionalism, Business Etiquette, and Personal Accountability b) **Emotional Intelligence**: Using Emotional Intelligence on the Job c) **Strengths**: My Strengths and Weaknesses video d) **Conflict Management/Customer Service**: Workplace Conflict: Strategies for Resolving Conflicts e) **Decisiveness**: Overcoming the Barriers to Decisiveness f) **Influencing and Negotiations**: Negotiation Essentials: Communicating g) **Team Building**: Leading Teams: Building Trust and Commitment h) **Diversity**: Managing a Diverse Team i) **Next Steps**: Leadership Essentials: Creating Your Own Leadership Development Plan	a) 1 hour b) 1 hour c) 5 minutes d) 1 hour e) 1 hour f) 1 hour g) 1 hour h) 1 hour i) 1 hour	

SAMPLE LEARNING PLAN (continued)

Activity	Description	Estimated time	Date completed
Program Component 3: Evaluation	Request the evaluation from Roderick Mance of the Virtual University at roderick.mance@dm.usda.gov and complete the survey.	30 minutes	
Program Component 4: Mentoring	Identify someone to serve as your mentor to help you develop leadership skills	Minimum of 3 1 hour sessions	
Program Component 5: Shadowing	Identify at least one leader to shadow as you are completing the program.	Minimum of 3 1 hour sessions	
Program Component 6: Additional development (optional)	Identify additional development activities based on your interests and the results of the Competency Self Assessment	To be determined based on the activities selected	

Remember to discuss your training with your supervisor, and to request approval for the time you spend in training, as well as to include the training on your Individual Development Plan (IDP).

Growing leaders is important to us at OHRM. Thanks for investing time to develop your skills, and for considering a commitment to filling a leadership role in USDA, both now and in the future. Leaders provide the foundation for our success.